

**DOE Commission
on Fire Safety
and Preparedness**

**Subcommittee #3 – Emergency Response
and Evaluation of Spread and Fire
Fighting Risks
Conference Call #6
Key Discussion Items and Notes
May 18, 2001**

Key Discussion Items and Notes

The following is a brief summary of **key discussion items and notes** from the sixth Subcommittee conference call of Subcommittee #3 – Emergency Response and Evaluation of Spread and Fire Fighting Risks held May 18, 2001. The teleconference included select DOE Fire Chiefs who are using best practices in the management of their departments. Conference call participants are listed at the end of these notes. The call was chaired by Garry Briese.

The **Next conference call** of the Subcommittee will be **Thursday, June 14, 2001 at 2:00pm EST**. The conference call number will be provided closer to the call.

Key Discussion Items:

- Changing the DOE fire safety organization perception.
- Personnel, training and budget issues.
- Incident Command, Unified Command, and On-Scene Command implementation.
- Discussion on contractor issues.
- Discussion on success, needed changes and tools required to maintain fire protection.

Next Steps:

- Convene another teleconference with select Prime site managers/contract managers or relevant staff level to broaden perspective on successful best practices in the management of sites.
- Lorlee Mizell will prepare a summary of the Augusta Fire Chiefs Meeting.
- RPI will provide a trip summary of the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) visit.

Discussion Notes:

The Commission had an open-ended discussion with Fire Chiefs that have been successful using best practices in the management of their departments.

At the meeting in Augusta, Commissioner Lorlee Mizell stayed for the Fire Chiefs meeting at the DOE Fire Safety Workshop which was informative and gave a good perspective on how DOE and chiefs operate.

The response in the past to fire service has been: “been there done that; nothing changes.” The Commission is looking for ways to change that perception and would like the Fire Chiefs’ recommendations on how to change fire safety in an organizational manner at DOE.

Gordon Veerman (Argonne) the changing government aspect hinders progress. Government sometimes gets bigger, sometimes smaller, so you can't tell how long contract will last. Area makes a difference: with a low level of radiation you are more apt to use mutual aid. Fire fighting and Hazmat are very labor intensive. It is difficult to plan ahead when you are unsure what will happen from year to year with the Federal budget.

In 1984 we were a 1/3 larger. We are unsure what will happen next using minimal staff to get by. Pension fund makes a difference with retention issues. We rely heavily on mutual aid about 3-4 calls a day and 12.5% calls are back to back. Mutual aid is very important.

Don Good (Hanford)

We are covering a larger area: 900 square miles with 21 staff members and we are facing budget pressure. A 30% possible reduction across the board, including site management. We have had assessment requirements and retaining resources. Our staff is at an absolute minimum for some kinds of hazards. Mutual Aid is not heavily relied upon. Reciprocal Assistance with Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management is helpful with wildland fire mitigation.

There have been personnel reductions and we have had trouble getting new staff outside the department. Hiring internally is suggested, but often they do not have the experience or want the fire fighting position. Every site trains fire fighters or contracts with state training facility.

We are starting from zero over the last 5 years. We do coordinate with NWCG qualifications modified for site. We can't find 1001 qualified fire fighters so State of Idaho Emergency Training Level 1 and 2 is through the state. EMS instructors are on-site, but sometimes are also enrolled elsewhere.

Q: Why not have training at Hammer?

A: The Travel budget does not support sending people to Hammer and we have a local training facility that is comparable.

Tim Parker (Rocky Flats)

We use the COG system and 1001 candidates. We are limited to work force restructuring. On-site personnel get consideration, but if they don't pass training, we are not obligated to hire them. Over the last 5 years we have had a lot of turnover. We lost 48 people in 3 years of our 57. Just last year, 30% of the staff left. There have been efforts to retain personnel, but there is competition with resources. Candidates are well trained and close to 66% have degrees. Federally funded contract situation makes it difficult.

Baseline Needs Assessment uses industry standards which are not like 1710 which is very subjective and not mandatory. Site Manager uses as they see fit by contractor and budget affects determining factors.

Don Good: (Hanford)

We lost staff and budget. We have been successful in holding the line but people are lost to surrounding fire departments. Authority that fire departments once had is declining. They don't have as much authority with defensible space. Contracts are based more on profit and fee goals. Sites are driven by contractor and fee to accomplish certain milestones. The budget is always an issue. There is no money for travel or Red Card training for CDG. There is no backing for certification and qualifications.

Scott Hackler (Y-12)

Our budget has been on an upturn the past 6-8 years. We had our first layoff in the department last year. There was a 12%% reduction in budget. BWXT is our contractor. Outside hiring is bid at the minimum. We have had no successful bidders inside since 1988. We have had to bring

people from out of state. EMS training was contracted out to gain the necessary experienced personnel. Off-site train-the-trainer classes were held to teach French rescue and high rope rescue.

John Sharpy (Lawrence Livermore)

We have enjoyed good relationships with management and they value our presence. We do not fight for money and existence. We can achieve our most important goals. We have one contractor to run the entire site and we also protect Livermore. Our size is not as large as Hanford, about 14 ½ square miles, and a split site. We have grass vs. forest fire problems. We have training recruiters with California qualified instructors with 1001 qualifications, EMT 1 or paramedic. We jointly recruit with 8 other departments. We have our choice of a large number of people to pool from. Firefighting in California is “in vogue” and there is very little turnover except for retirements.

COMMISSIONERS QUESTIONS:

Q: At site are the right people involved in creating plans and putting together training generally?

A: Gordon Veerman: We use a rigid Incident Command and it has been good and worked well.

Don Good: We were finally given authority as commander on site.

Q: Are problems caused by failure to implement work plan or failure to do hazards analysis? Are the site management implementing any after action measures?

A: Scott Hackler (Y-12): incident acuent is being graded in September. Incident Command was implemented in 1992 and has become better.

Don: We don't use IC but on-scene Commander. There is an IC (EAM) bases calls on our input. BLM and Unified Command was established. Not using IC causes problems, but our system still works well. The tracking system also works well. Tracking action items is good for management control.

Don Good (Hanford) contractor change – things fall through the cracks and some accidents occurred.

Gordon Veerman (Argonne) comments on reports don't reflect the actual occurrence. Action Items are addressable more than real problem. They want to ensure they “look good.”

Tim Parker (Rocky Flats) There is a struggle with who should be incident commander. Working through over 5-6 years with training and education of Mutual Aid dept. We do not use Fire Department as incident command. Tiered system: alarm (Facility Manger or control is IC. Until the Fire Department arrives and they're assigned operation sector or they are IC. This has been successful, but not ideal.

It usually depends on the type of contractor you have, i.e., fatality may cause loss of fee. There is a need to identify problems, track and fix them with corrective action plan. Having a D&E site contractor and subcontractor make it difficult to implement.

Q: Jessie Roberson: With regards to contractor behavior roles and responsibilities for baseline assessments, is there a difference than when you worked with subcontractor?

A: Tim Parker (Rocky Flats) The emphasis on site services has changed – it is not a core function, but a liability to a project not the site. The culture is better now. It has become more challenging to implement, but it is cheaper and easier to get things done without subcontractor involvement.

Q: Jessie Roberson: Do you feel like you are an active part on the management team?

A: Don Whittaker (Idaho) We are definitely part of the management process, working closely with roads and building grounds crew. We do assessments together and then action is taken to fix them. Good prioritizing – cleaning around facilities, clearing shrubbery.

John Sharpy (Lawrence Livermore). We are an integral part of planning process: infrastructure, roads, etc. We take care of problems, and can get things done. Incident Command: different: we are the IC and are expected to take charge of the emergency. The Emergency Manager comes from the Lab, but they manage the consequences, not the emergency. Site management reports are taken care of.

Q: Mike Freeman (LA County): Who are the contractors responsible to?

A: Scott Hackler (Y-12) contractors are responsible to DOE as customer, Systems requirement document to assess program requirements.

Q: Are there various entities to make changes with?

A: DOE production dollars mean competition. Requirement is tied back to operating facility.

Scott Hackler: reevaluate facility operations. Fire systems and fire response were credited in facilities to have a license to operate.

Don Whittaker (Idaho) We spend a lot of time defending the budget.

Tim Parker (Rocky Flats) working off a specific time period. Our site is gone by 2006 so there is a different opportunity to move the money.

John Sharpy (Lawrence Livermore) Unified contractor, DOE is customer. Our site has only one contractor, so there is no fighting issue.

Gordon Veerman (Argonne) University of Chicago runs the site, but the bottom line is the dollar. Having a strong DOE contact makes a difference in what support and resources you can obtain. You definitely need a strong contact to make things happen. At the Argonne site, there is a group of DOE oversight staff (20-25 people). There are 5-6 in the operations group (DOE fire protection) and if they are strong, your likelihood of getting things you need from DOE increases.

COMMISSION should focus on the point of contact relationship!

John Sharpy (Lawrence Livermore) The type of contract used makes a difference whether it's award plus or cost plus. They can get resources from DOE but money is added vs. a one lump sum which is not as easy to control monies allocated to fire protection.

Contracting out creates problem. Contractor Worker Safety Standard Act: subcontractor must meet law and it prohibits contracting out because Fire Departments can't meet requirements.

Q: Jessie Roberson: Is there flexibility and how money is spent? Do you view the restrictions at the program or DOE level? .

Be careful with needs, hazards, sites, "One size does not fit all".

Lorlee Mizell: Fire Chiefs must understand that comments are directed to site management and making sure you're getting the support you need.

Garry Briese to Fire Chiefs – The Commission wants to help increase fire safety on DOE sites. We do not want to be another report filed away. Help us be helpful to you.

Q: We have had discussion with 6 Fire Chiefs. Should we talk with 6 Site Managers or relevant Prime staff at appropriate level?

A: All agreed this would be valuable.

The Chair, Garry Briese had 3 Questions for the Fire Chiefs

1. What makes you successful?
2. What 2 Changes would you recommend for more long-term stability?
3. What tools do you need to maintain a good level of fire protection?

Scott Hackler (Y-12)

1. Level of management support has made them successful budget wise. Response time is good because we are smaller.
2. Change prescriptive requirement. Hard to convince the outside due to low fire loss.
3. Need prescribed minimums for standards. Tailor to site but need emphasis to carry through budget process

Don Whittaker (Idaho)

1. Dedicated personnel has made us successful. Teaming efforts with local jurisdiction and local DOE point of contact.
2. Would change the fact that we are not part of the indirect funding pool overhead tax. Need direct funding by those providing services to.
3. Need DOE to tell us what minimum coverage or insurance is necessary.

Don Good (Hanford)

1. Dedicated people make us successful. We have worked hard with DOE as the customer.
2. We would change indirect funding so we could stand on our own.
3. Need further direction from RRL. Need equipment such as programmable radios. Participation in local state emergency management meetings is necessary.

Tim Parker (Rocky Flats)

1. Dedication to customer service has made us successful. Make the mission happen with management team and personnel.
2. Would like to change funding aspect to convince the contractor what they're responsible for without conflicting requirements. We also need direct funding.
3. The Baseline Needs Assessment needs to be used as it was intended. Commitment regardless of site, personnel and competition. Also, DOE has great fire protection support but have limited role. They need more flexibility to provide directives at DOE to contractor.

John Sharpy (Lawrence)

1. Professionalism of staff, high level of performance, training and education have made us successful. We are ahead of power curb with HAZMAT, etc. which makes our experience valuable.
2. The P in Protection is lost due to confusion on where Fire Department fits in DOE picture. Emergency Preparedness office think they own the Fire Department due to 151.1 order which is prescribed. We need to clear up confusion. Lost order on Fire Protection (employers safety). Lost guidance on fire protection (design and emergency response).

Gordon Veerman (Argonne)

1. Our tremendously dedicated people make us successful.
2. We would like to change security prescribed funding.
3. We need more directives on what is expected.

Q: Garry Briese asked if the Commission was on right track or if they were missing anything?

A: All agreed that the Commission is on the right track and that the key is backed behind the dollar tied to people tied to policy. Although some of the sites are sometimes a mixed bag, the commonality is funding. . Baseline Needs Assessments are sometimes good but validation should be ensured.

All Commission Members thanked the Chiefs for their feedback and their participation in the call concluded.

The Commissioners remain on the call to discuss a few items.

Frank Russo informed the Commissioners that the Comprehensive Review has been signed off on and soon the Defense Board would also have a chance to review.

There is a Schedule published for future reviews and the Commissioners are encouraged to participate if they are interested.

Frank believes that a background briefing on contractor issues regarding conditional payment, etc., is necessary and should be presented before talking with Site Managers. He wants to ensure the Commission has the right tools to ask the right questions. All agreed that the Commission might want to have a series of these useful discussions and possibly talk with field office managers or chiefs.

There will be a PowerPoint presentation made available, along with other documents that will aid in future discussion on contracts. Frank will brief on these contract issues within a few weeks.

The call concluded with a reiteration to the Commission that the Secretary of Energy believes this Commission and fire protection issues are important.

Next Conference Call

Next conference call of the Subcommittee was scheduled for **Monday, July 16 at 3pm EST**. The conference call number will be provided closer to the call.

Conference Call Participants

- Commission Members
 - Garry Briese, Subcommittee Chair
 - Mike Freeman (LA County Fire Chief) and Margie Kanshaw
 - Lorlee Mizell
 - Jessie Roberson
- Fire Chiefs
 - Don Good (Hanford Site)
 - Tim Parker (Rocky Flats Environmental Technology Site)
 - John Sharry (Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory)
 - Scott Hackler (Oak Ridge Y-12 Plant)
 - Gordon Veerman (Argonne National Laboratory)
 - Don Whittaker (Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory)
- U.S. Department of Energy
 - Frank Russo, Designated Federal Official
 - Dennis Kubicki, Senior Fire Protection Engineer
 - Barbie Harshman, Federal Assistant
- RPI
 - Melinda Watters